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THE REFORMATION AND THE INNS OF COURT.

BY

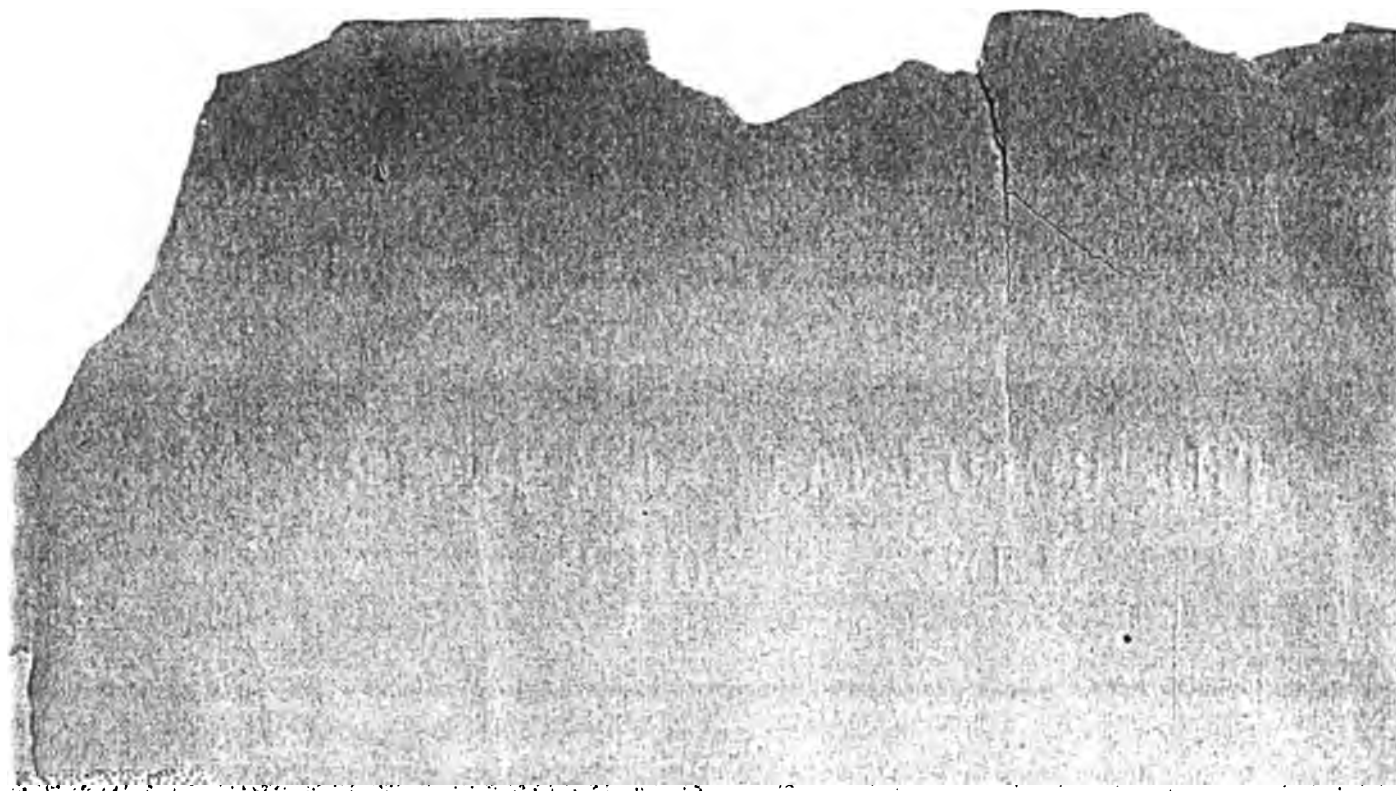
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*A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ST. PAULS ECCLESIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
DECEMBER 10TH, 1902.*

BY

REV. REGINALD J. FLETCHER, M.A.,
(Reader of Gray's Inn).

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The Author.

THE REFORMATION AND THE INNS OF COURT

BY

REV. REGINALD J. FLETCHER, M.A.

Taking their origin in the fourteenth century, the four Inns of Court had already, at the accession of Henry VIII., been long established under their present names on the sites which they still occupy. Their constitution and methods of education had been based upon the same ideas as those of the mediæval universities, and had, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, become sanctioned by ancient tradition. Their primary business was, of course, the teaching of the common law, but for half a century at least they had been known, not merely as legal seminaries and as the head-quarters of the legal gild, but also as finishing schools wherein the sons of the nobility and gentry might learn good manners and accomplishments as well as history and other matters reckoned useful in a public career. They had begun humbly; they were now advancing rapidly in importance.¹ The social position of the practitioners of the common law had improved and was improving. The Tudor policy was conducive to this, and so, we may suppose, was the gild-system, which maintained the exclusive privilege then, and now, attaching to the members of the four Societies. Moreover, the increasing laxity of the moral discipline exercised by the Church was creating in English society a demand for some secular force which should make for order. English law was becoming a more important factor in English life, and with the importance of English law grew the importance of English lawyers and English law schools. Taking into account the position of the professional students, and also the quality of those students who frequented the Inns without any intention of practising before the Courts, we may say that at the beginning of the Reformation struggle it would have been recognized among the dominant classes that the future of the country would be largely in the hands of the youthful fellows of Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, and the Inner and Middle Temples. At any rate, so it turned out to be. Consequently the attitude of the four Societies towards the great religious change should serve to illustrate the sentiments of a section of the laity whose sentiments are well worth knowing.

At the time when Henry VIII. began his ecclesiastical exploits, the four Societies were but tenants of their Inns, and did not own, as they do at present, the places of worship round

¹ The materials for a scientific study of the history of the Inns have of late years been given to the world by the publication of the *Calendar of Records of the Inner Temple*, the *Black Books of Lincoln's Inn*, and the *Pension Book of Gray's Inn*. The Inner Temple book begins at the year 1505; that of Lincoln's Inn at 1422; in the case of Gray's Inn, most unfortunately, all that remains of the entries between 1509 and 1569 is a series of extracts from MSS. now lost. The earliest complete MS. now in the possession of this Society starts at the year 1569.

which their chambers clustered. The beautiful Church of the Knights Templars had been since 1324 in the possession of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Of its appointments we may gain an idea from the inventory taken by the Sheriffs at the expulsion of the Templars.¹ It appears from this, that besides the high altar there were an altar of St. John and an altar of St. Nicholas. The document also mentions a "Church of the Blessed Mary" as being "outside the door of the hall," an item wherein, I take it, the Sheriffs blundered. The building, which they call "the great Church" had been dedicated in 1185 to St. Mary,² and we may safely accept the statement in the Close Roll of 12 Edw. III. (pt. 2 m. 34), that the chapel outside the hall door was dedicated to St. Thomas. There was a plentiful supply of vestments, altar vessels and other accessories.³ As for relics, the Templars professed to have the sword with which St. Thomas of Canterbury was killed. Whether the goods in the inventory all came into the hands of the Hospitallers we do not know, but one need not doubt that the Knights maintained all things handsomely. In place of the six chaplains⁴ who had officiated for the Templars, they appointed a Master and four chaplains. These priests were housed in certain buildings near the church—buildings which were not included in the lease granted at some time in the fourteenth century to the lawyers—and were maintained by the Order of St. John down to its dissolution in 1540.

Among the Cotton MSS.⁵ is a description of the orders and customs prevailing at the Middle Temple, from which I take the following account of the services held in the church during the later days of the Hospitallers' control.

"Ther man^o of devyne s^ovices in the Churche. Item that they have ev^oy day iii masses saide one after the other & the first mass dothe begyn in the mornyng at seven a clok or therabouts. The festivall dayes they have matyns & masse solemply songe and durynge the matyns singyng, they have iii masses saide."

I see no reason to doubt that these services were for the exclusive benefit of the two legal societies, the members of which had eighteen offering days in the year for the benefit of the church.

The original Chapel of Lincoln's Inn⁶ had been the manorial chapel of the Bishops of Chichester, whose town-house formed the earliest home of the Honourable Society. There are references in the Black Books of Lincoln's Inn, to "the Chapel of St. Richard," and to "the Chapel of our Lady," from which I gather that the main chapel was dedicated to

¹ Exchequer L. T. R. Misc. Roll 20, m. 3. A translation is given in Baylis' *Temple Church*.

² The following inscription was to be found up to 1695 on the wall of the round, the oldest, portion: "Anno ab incarnatione Domini MCLXXXV dedicata hec ecclesia in honore Beæ Marie a dño Eraclio Dei grā Sçe Resurrectionis ecclesie Patriarcha IIII Idus Februarii qui eā annatim petentibus de tjunta s̄ penitētia ix dies indulsit."

³ At each side altar an ivory comb was included among the accessories; by which we are reminded that the priest vested himself at the altar, and that there was a time when after putting the alb over his head he had required to adjust his hair. No doubt the use of the comb eventually become purely ceremonial.

⁴ The inventory mentions that each chaplain was paid 15½ pence a week.

⁵ Cotton MSS. Vitellius C. 9. The MS. has suffered by fire, but Dugdale gives a transcription taken previous to the injury. See *Origines Juridicales*, p. 196.

⁶ An account of this chapel was given by Mr. Paley Baildon, F.S.A., *Transactions S.P.E.S.*, vol. iv, part iv. The writer of the present paper had not, however, seen it when he had the honour of addressing the Society.

St. Richard of Chichester, and that in, or annexed to, it, there was a Lady Chapel. The officiating priest seems from the first to have been the Chaplain of the Society, appointed and paid by the Benchers. In 1517 a second chaplaincy was instituted; Sir Robert Drury having promised to find the stipend in return for the admission to the Inn of his son William. This additional priest had the duty of praying in perpetuity for Sir Robert's soul, and Sir Robert's son kept up the payment after his father's death.

The Society of Gray's Inn made use of the Chapel of the manor of Portpool, which was held of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's by the Greys of Wilton. In 1315 John de Grey had founded a chaplaincy there, the stipend being provided by an annual charge laid upon the property of St. Bartholomew's Priory, Smithfield, in return for a grant of de Grey's land. The original condition was that the priest should say mass for the soul of the founder, his ancestors and all the faithful departed, but by 1539 it had been "tyme out of mynde" the said priest's duty to "syng and saye masse and other divine service every day yerely . . . for the studyent gentilmen & felowes of" the Inn. The Greys held the advowson of the chantry, and when they sold the manor in 1506 this went with the property to Hugh Denys, a courtier of Henry VII., and from his executors, a few years later, to the prior and convent of the Carthusian monastery at Shene, who retained it till 1539. There is no trace of any dedication.

Both Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn would seem to have maintained private chapels in the neighbouring parish church of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and they contributed, upon occasion, to the repair of the church. The two Societies, as well as various individual members, are mentioned as benefactors in the abstract of old records of St. Andrew's drawn up by Thomas Bentley, churchwarden, in the time of Elizabeth.¹

The earliest sign of the coming changes which appears in the records of the Inns is to be found in an extract made by Dugdale from a lost MS. relating to Gray's Inn. It will be remembered that in November, 1538, Henry VIII. decided on striking at the ideal of what may conveniently be called the anti-Erastian party through their especial saint, and issued his proclamation that Thomas Becket, "Rebel and Traitor to his Prince," should not from henceforth be called a saint, and that his images and pictures should be put down and avoided out of all churches, chapels and other places.² Six months later steps were taken at Gray's Inn to give effect to this order. On May 16th, 1539, the Benchers ordered "that Edward Hall, one of the Readers (*i.e.*, Benchers) of this house should take out a certain window in the chapel of this house, wherein the picture of the said Archbishop was gloriously painted; & place another instead thereof in memory of our Lord praying in the

¹ The *servicium* rendered by Reginald de Grey, who died in 1308, to the Dean and Chapter had been 42s. 2d. a year. On the death of Henry de Grey in 1396 the Manor of Portpool was again described in the *Inquisitio post mortem* as being held of the Dean and Chapter, but "on what terms the jurors did not know." A family named Chigwell seems also to have had an interest in the manor. Perhaps, however, any ownership superior to that of the Greys was a legal fiction, designed for the protection of the property. The license for the sale of Portpool in 1516 to the Convent of Shene makes no mention of the Dean and Chapter, but describes the manor as held of the Crown as an escheat, for that Robert Chigwell, of whom it was formerly held had died without heir.

² This interesting MS. is preserved in the vestry of St. Andrew's Church.

³ Burnet gives the proclamation (*History of the Reformation*, vol. iii, part 2, No. lxi), but the reference he gives to the Cotton Library is not now correct.

Mount." This Edward Hall was the chronicler,¹ and we may imagine that the task was quite to his taste. From the delay of obedience to the proclamation I conjecture that the Carthusians, who still owned the chapel, had refused, or deliberately neglected, to take down the window, and that the work was done at a time when they dared not assert themselves and the lawyers had become virtually masters of a property which was formally surrendered with the monastery in the ensuing August.

In October, 1539, St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, shared the fate of Shene, and the Court of Augmentation had to deal at the same time with two charges affecting Gray's Inn—the annual payment of £7 13s. 4d. due from St. Bartholomew's for the chaplaincy founded by John de Grey, and with the rent of £6 13s. 4d. payable by the Society of Gray's Inn to the Priory of Shene. The result was that the king's liability, taken over from St. Bartholomew's, was reduced by £1 a year, and so balanced exactly against the asset of rent taken over from Shene. Gray's Inn became Crown property, but though the Crown paid the chaplain's stipend, the Society seems from this time forward to have held the advowson of the chapel.²

Lincoln's Inn also passed out of ecclesiastical hands at this period. In 1536 Bishop Sampson of Chichester had sold the freehold of his estate there to William and Eustace Sulyard. In 1539 the rest of the site, which had been rented by the Society from the Hospital of St. Lazarus at Burton, was granted, on the suppression of the Hospital, to John Dudley, Lord Lisle. These changes, however, did not affect the position of the Society in any way.

The anti-monastic movement brought at the Temple a change somewhat similar to that which occurred at Gray's Inn. By a special Act of Parliament in 1540, the Order of the Knights Hospitallers was suppressed, their possessions seized, and themselves dismissed with pensions. The two societies of the Inner and Middle Temple thereupon became Crown tenants and were henceforth responsible for the repair of the church. The Master and four chaplains, however, continued to receive their stipends from the Crown out of the revenues of the Hospitallers. Stow, in his *Survey* (ed. of 1598) speaks as if in that year this was still the state of affairs, but he was probably mistaken. I gather from the records that as early as 1571 the reduction of the number of clergy to two, the Master and the Reader, or Lecturer, had taken place. Of these the Reader was at first paid by the Master: afterwards by the two Societies.

The references to Liturgical changes in the next reign are slighter than one would wish, but still not uninteresting. At Lincoln's Inn we hear in 1547 of 15s. being paid for a Bible, the "Homyles" & a desk in the chapel; in 1550 7s. was paid for a new table in the chapel called the "Communion Tabyll," and in 1552 4s. was paid for the new Book of Common Prayer. The orders of the government were, it would seem, obediently, but quite quietly, carried out. In view of what was happening in regard to chantries, however, it is perhaps

¹ His well-known Chronicle was originally called *The Union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre & Yorks*. It began at the reign of Henry IV., and was intended to cover that of Henry VIII., but Hall did not complete his work and the chapters relating to the later years of Henry VIII. were compiled from his notes by Richard Grafton, the printer. The first edition was published in 1548, and dedicated to Edward VI.

² At any rate in Elizabeth's time the Benchers appointed the Chaplain.

worth noting that towards the end of 1550 the Bench of this Inn received 20s. from the executors of Sir John Hynde, one of the King's Justices of the Bench, lately deceased, bequeathed with the condition that prayers should be said in the chapel for his soul.

The Visitation which was ordered in 1552, for the retrieving on behalf of the Crown of such Church plate and vestments as were considered superfluous after the second reform of the Service Book, evidently suggested to the Benchers of Gray's Inn the idea of disposing of some of their ecclesiastical goods, for the augmentation, not of the king's revenues, but of their own. At any rate, in November, 1552, their Pensioner sold "for the behoof of the Society" "one vestment with a cross of red velvet, a holywater stock of brass, two candlesticks, a little bell of brass, a vestment of silk spect with gold, & a pair of organs." After the sale, we are told, there remained in the chapel the articles which were elsewhere spared by the royal commissioners, viz.: "a chales, a surpless, a Bible of the largest volume, a Psalter, a Book of service, an Aulter-cloth, a Table, a lanthorne of glass & a chist." One notices that the new "Communion Table" was still covered by an "Aulter Cloth."

The Inner Temple records are silent as to any similar changes. Perhaps these matters were in the hands of the Master of the Temple Church, and did not come before either company of Benchers.

The Act passed soon after the accession of Mary for restoring the Latin service and the Church furniture appropriate to it, was evidently obeyed with promptitude both at Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn. In the first year of the reign a new altar was set up at Gray's Inn, with a painted cloth to hang before it, and three altar cloths, a super-altar, an alb, an ephód, a corporas and a girdle were bought. Sir Nicholas Bacon was Treasurer at the time, and Sir Gilbert Gerrard was a prominent Bencher. Perhaps, therefore, we may conclude that Protestant sympathies account for the rather meagre outlay (£1 18s. 7d.) which was held sufficient. In Lent, 1554, we find a priest engaged at Lincoln's Inn in saying masses for the departed, and in the accounts for that year we have the following items of expenditure:—20s. for two books called in English "ii great portuasses," and a missal for the chapel; 7s. for a canopy for the pyx; 4s. 8d. for iron for the pyx; 4s. 4d. for the pyx itself; 2d. for the cord and 3d. for the leaden weight by which it hung; 4s. for the "hollywater stocke"; 14d. for "satteyn of brygges" (Bruges?), and 16d. for a tailor to mend the vestments. Later in the same year painted images, with tabernacles, of St. Richard and St. Mary were set up—perhaps in places from which they had been ejected—at a cost of 25s. 4d. The following items also appear:—"Three qrs. of locarum¹ for an amis 7½d.; to the suffragan's servaunt for bringing the vest^t. and albe to be halloed 4d.; for thapparelling of ii albes 4d.; for taking downe the dexe in the Chappell 1d." If the old Liturgy was grudgingly restored at Gray's Inn, the Treasurer of the sister Society carried out the work with enthusiasm. This official was William Rastell, the son of John Rastell, a brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More, and an ally of his in the defence of the doctrine of Purgatory. He (William) had left England shortly after the accession of Edward VI., and had been fined £10 in that, being Treasurer, he had done so without leave of the Governors of the Inn. Now he returned and, besides, aiding the

¹ *I.e.*, lockram, a cheap and coarse kind of linen, taking its name from Locrenan in Brittany (*Century Dictionary*). See also a note by Mr. Cuthbert Atchley in *Transactions of S.P.E.S.*, vol. iv, p. 149.

changes officially ordered, he made provision for the commemoration of the wife whom he had lost during his exile thus :—

“ In this Ester terme anno primo Marie Regine, Mr. William Rastell, one of the Benchers of this howse of Lyncolne's Inne gave towarde the furnyshynge of the alter in the Chappell in the howse, a greate image or pycure in a Table of the takyng downe of Cryste from the crosse & too curtens of greane & yellowe sarcenett for to hang at the endes of the same alter & also a clothe of greane & yellow sarcenett, lyned with canvas, to hang befor the said altar ; which thynges the said Mr. Rastell gave to have the prayers herunder written for the sowles herunder specyfyed.”

The souls were those of Winefred Rastell, wife to William, and of the parents, kinsfolk and friends of both husband and wife. It is added that—

“ Also the said Mr. Rastell dyd then at his costes for his sayd wivys soule gyld the v knoppys of the canape for the sacrament which cost him iiij shillings.”

Rastell, perhaps for his zeal, was shortly afterwards called to be Serjeant, and a little before Mary's death was made a Judge of the Common Pleas—a post which he retained for four or five years after Elizabeth's accession. Any changes which were made at the Temple are unrecorded, except for the following :—

“ Memorandum that I, Anthony Stapleton, now Treasurer, have delivered two pair of silver censers, belonging to the Church, to Dr. Armested, Master of the Temple, to keep safely to the use of the Church ; & this was by the assent & agreement of the Bench, as appeareth by a bill of his hand bearing date the last day of November anno 1555.”

The Elizabethan changes at Lincoln's Inn included the taking down of the altar and the provision, in June, 1559, of “ suche bokes as shalbe requysite for the chaplayn of this House to say suche service in the chappell as of late is appointed by the Statute in that behalf made and provided.” The books cost 15s. The altar stone was sold some years later for 5s. We may be sure that the altars at Gray's Inn and the Temple were similarly taken down. By 1560 the two silver censers already referred to had been removed from the Temple Church by William Hone, Treasurer of the Middle Temple, and the restoration of Communion in both kinds, as well as the current prejudice against the use of vessels which had been associated with the old rite, is reflected in an order of 1563 at the Inner Temple “ that conference shall be had with the company of the Middle Temple touching the provision of some convenient cup to minister the Communion withal in the Church.” Communion cups were bought at Lincoln's Inn in 1571, and at Gray's Inn in 1584.¹

The Marian persecution does not seem to have affected the members of the Inns. It will be remembered that one of the characteristics of those who directed it was the cowardice with which they refrained from molesting the more influential class of laity. But partly, perhaps, this immunity was due to the fact that many of the lawyers were in sympathy with the old learning, and that among the rest there would be a strong disposition to conform to whatever happened at the moment to be the law of the land. At any rate there were notable Protestants at the Inns who were unmolested. During the first ten years of the next reign there is a similar absence of any signs of compulsion in regard to religion. On the other hand the struggle which Elizabeth was compelled to wage for her crown from 1568 onwards

¹ The cup then bought at Gray's Inn is still in use. The Communion plate now used at the Temple and Lincoln's Inn is of a slightly later date.

is clearly marked in measures taken to secure at the Inns that orthodoxy which spelt loyalty. The wave of feeling which culminated in the Northern rising of October, 1569, connected as it was with projects for seating the fair Papist Mary, Queen of Scots, on Elizabeth's throne, was carefully watched and dealt with before it became a rebellion, and among other steps taken by the Council was the examination of certain members of the Inns of Court as to whether they went to Church, whether they had received the Communion three times a year, and whether they had heard "masse, matyns or evensonge in Latten, or have been shreven or houselid after the popish mañer." The State paper which records their replies is endorsed by Burleigh—

"Putt out of cõmons & lodgyns in y^e house.

Forbeare to gyve counsell to any y^e Q. subjects as cõmon pledors.

Forb: also to resort to any barr of any Court to pleade by any mañer wise.

And thus to cõtynew [till] they shall recõcile themselves to obãve y^e laws ecclesiasticall, & theroff shall have y^e testimony frõ y^e B. of London."

A letter embodying these notes was sent to each of the four Inns in May, 1569, and appears to have been acted upon to some extent.

The Benchers, however, proved themselves persistently reluctant to have any hand in religious persecution. In 1572 the Council wrote to the Judges to complain of this attitude. In 1574 they sent an order that "none are to be suffered to have anie chambres or to be in cõmens in anie of the Houses of Court which, upon publique admonition once given by anie Reader, Benchers, or Utterbarrester, dothe not come and remayn att the usuall cõmon Prayers att the Church or Chappell of the same House." In 1577 they wrote to the Lord Keeper that the Inns were "greatly infected with popery," in consequence of which they desired him to appoint some well-affected members of each Society to draw up a list of recusants, and accordingly two returns were made, one containing the Benchers, classified as "pa" or "pro," and the other the junior members who absented themselves from Church. It was noted that at Gray's Inn four out of the sixteen Benchers, and at the Middle Temple seven out of fifteen, were suspected of papistry, while of the whole number of members of the four Inns taken together about one in four were more or less open to the charge of being opposed to the principles of the Reformation. Under pressure the Benchers issued orders from time to time as to the reception of the Holy Communion, and now and then expelled a recusant or two. But they were still unminded to play the Inquisitor, and in 1585 we find the Council complaining in sorrow and some anger to the Society of Gray's Inn that "not onely some seminarie popishe priests have bene heretofore harboured in Graies Inne, but alsoe have had their assemblies and masses . . . the fault whercof wee cannot but in some sort impute unto youe the Readers who having received heretofore divers tres from us to that purpose have not bene soe carefull to look unto this inconvenience as you ought to have bene." Partly, I expect, this tolerant attitude was due to knowledge that, in the case of the members of the Inns, nonconformity did not mean disloyalty, partly to the sense of fellowship developed by community life. We need not wonder if men who lived and worked around the same courts, read and mooted and dined and revelled in the same halls, were reluctant to set in motion any proceeding which might end in the death of a fellow member on the scaffold. It is interesting also to note in this connection that the changes of ritual and doctrine brought about successively under Edward VI., Mary

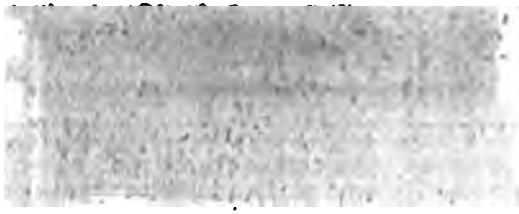
and Elizabeth do not appear to have involved in any one case the dismissal of a chaplain. At the Temple Dr. Ernestus, the Master appointed by the Hospitallers before the dissolution of 1539, continued to hold office till his death in 1560. At Lincoln's Inn, though the chaplains were constantly changing, the changes do not synchronise with the openings of new reigns or the promulgation of new religious ordinances. Sir Robert Fellowe, who was appointed before the death of Henry VIII., held office till 1551; his successor, Sir Thomas Tudball, officiated from that year till 1557; Sir Henry Alleyn, the next chaplain, continued in his post till 1564.

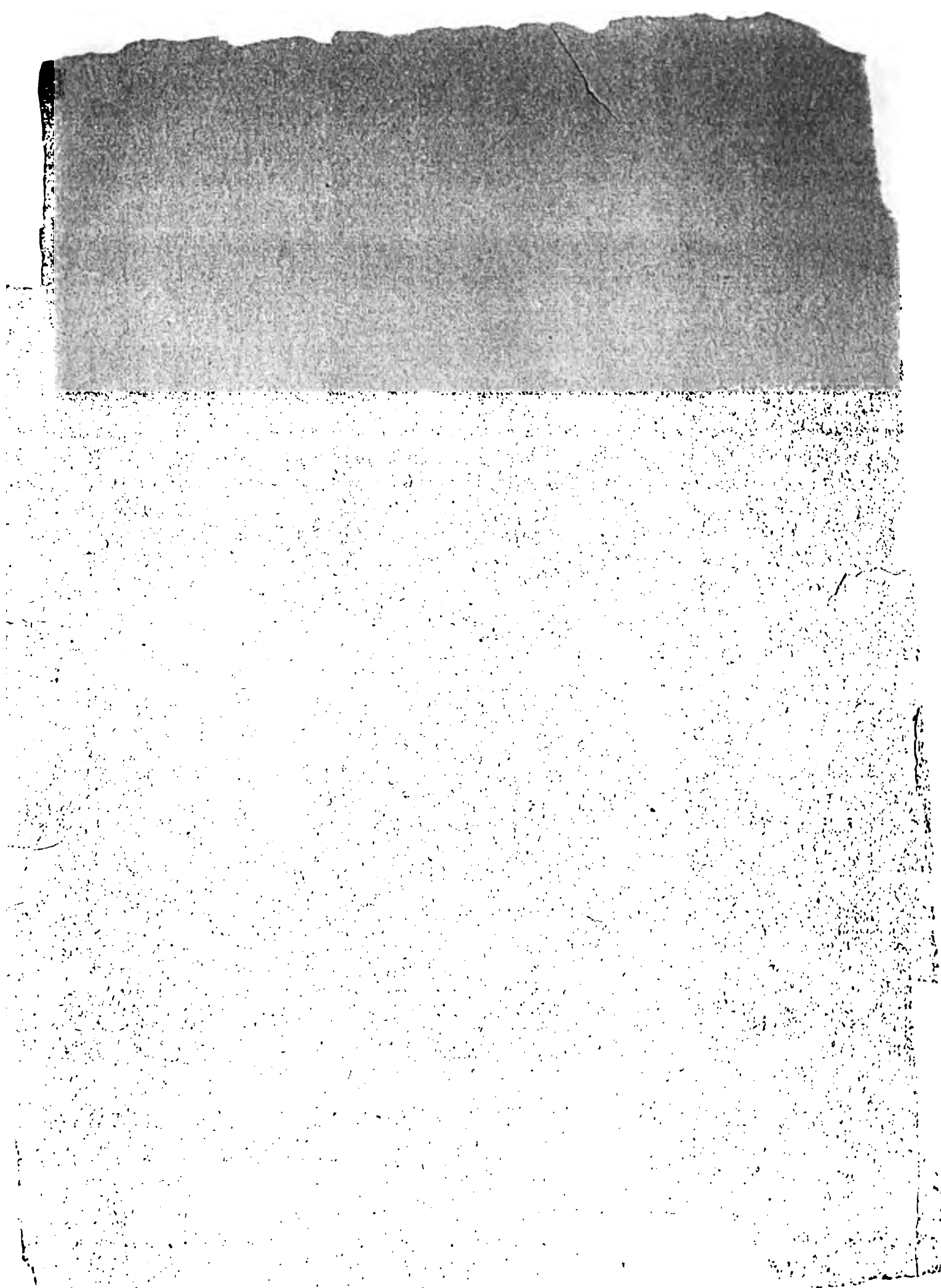
To preaching, as a means of spreading the new learning, the Societies had, on the other hand, no sort of objection. In 1569 a pulpit was set up in the chapel of Gray's Inn, and in the next year Lincoln's Inn followed suit. No doubt the homilies were duly read, and we find that occasionally in the next few years a fee of 10s. was paid to a Minister for a discourse. That Gray's Inn chapel might be a more convenient auditorium for sermons, the screen was removed in 1569 from the middle to the west end of the building, and stalls were made wherein the members might sit out the discourse in comfort. At the Temple there was from 1571 onwards a Divinity Reader in addition to the Master of the Temple, himself a Preaching Minister. Regular Preacherships, such as exist to-day, were created at Gray's Inn in 1576, and at Lincoln's Inn in 1581. Nor was Burleigh's endeavour to tune these pulpits thwarted. The first Preacher in Burleigh's own Society of Gray's Inn was William Cherke, who had been expelled from Cambridge for his militant Presbyterianism, and on Cherke's retirement the Puritan statesman secured the election of Dr. Thomas Crookes. At the same time the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, by express permission of the Council, elected Cherke to *their* Preachership. At the Temple Church Walter Travers, who had been Burleigh's chaplain, was preaching as deputy to Dr. Alvey, the Master, for some years previous to 1584, when Alvey died. It was due to the Queen's disbelief in the validity of his orders, and not to the lawyers of the Temple, that Travers was disappointed of the Mastership, and that Alvey's successor was Richard Hooker.

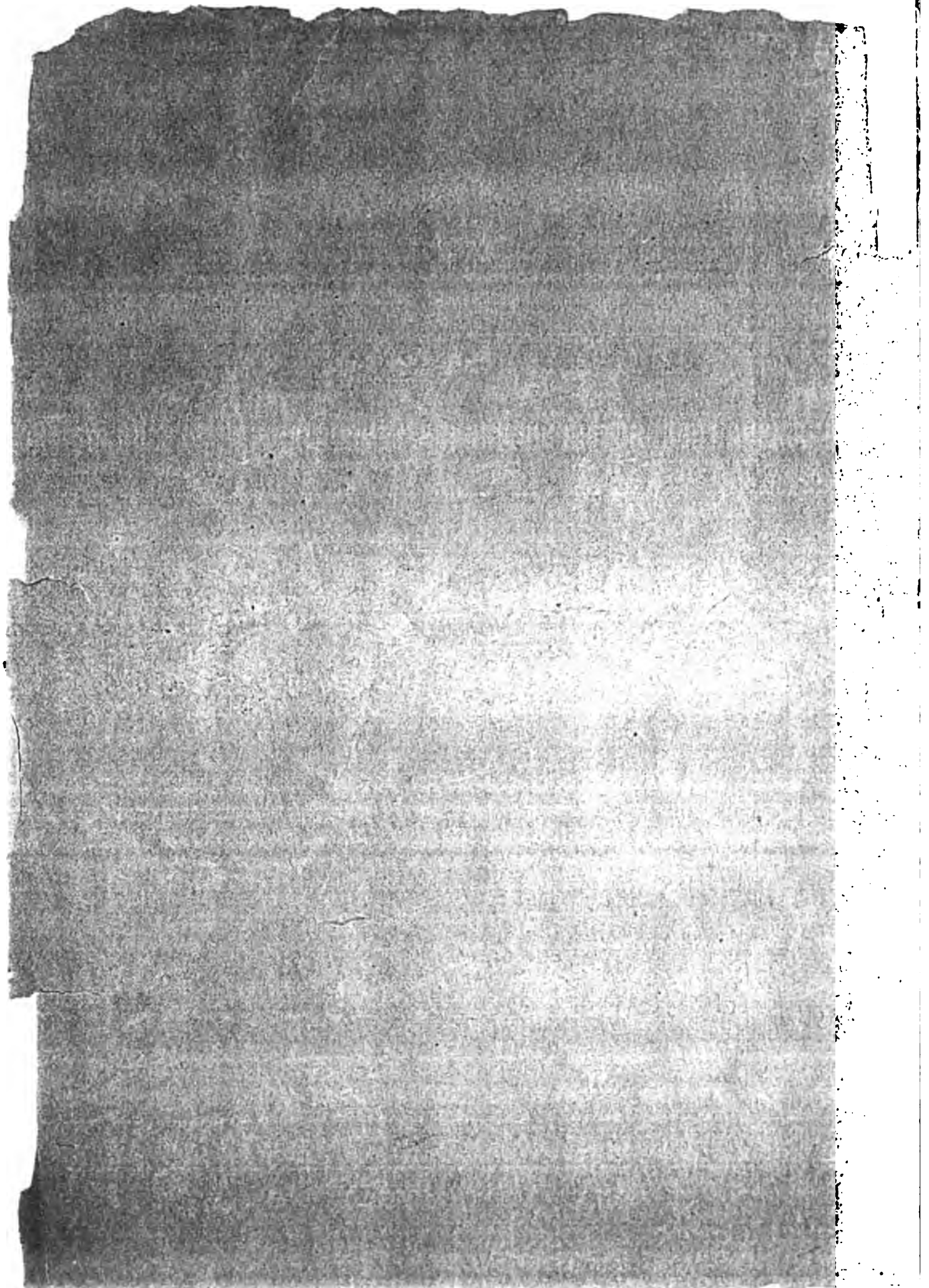
The materials for any generalization as to the way in which the Reformation affected the members of the Inns are less complete than one would wish. One fact, however, seems established by the records, namely, that the four Societies took the great religious struggle much more quietly than an ordinary student of the general history of the time would be inclined to suppose. Lawyers have not as a rule avoided religious controversy, and indeed we find that in the earlier stage of this contention Simon Fishe of Gray's Inn made an attack in his *Supplication of Beggars*, to which Sir Thomas More of Lincoln's Inn replied in his *Supplication of the Souls*. On the other hand, there were circumstances which would tend to lull in this case their controversial impulses. The anti-clerical policy of Henry VIII. had not only gratified the natural desire of a common-law practitioner to see the legal machinery with which he himself was connected sustained and triumphant as against a rival system; it had also put money in the pockets of the lawyers and generally of the class from which the Inns of Court were recruited. It is easy to understand how the lawyers as a body should have been well satisfied to see the clergy forced into acknowledging the Supreme Head of the State as Supreme Head of the Church. It is not difficult to find reasons why they should have acquiesced in the spoliation of the monasteries, though the four Societies were not, in their corporate capacity, great gainers thereby. We may take it that the bias of a practitioner of the common law would have been all in favour of doctrines and

institutions supported by ancient authority and precedent, all against new departures. And in fact there was evidently among them (as among the country gentry who were so largely educated at the Inns) a tolerably general reluctance to change the doctrines of purgatory and the mass.

As the Tudor theory of jurisdiction became more fully associated with ritual embodying new doctrine, we find more traces of a disposition in some members of the Inns to resist and in their fellows to wink at their "backwardness in religion." Yet even so, acquiescence, or at least submission, to the English Church was very general among them. Their tendency to popery has been exaggerated. I have shown that those suspected of it were about one in four of the members of the Inns, and of these a considerable number were reconciled after conference. Very few quitted the country. And those who conformed are not all to be dismissed as time-servers. Partly you may explain their conformity as the result of a conviction that the supreme question of the time was not so much one of doctrine (in regard to which they were conservative) as one of jurisdiction (in regard to which they were for national independence), and to an expectation that in doctrine the pendulum might swing back again. But partly, at least, it was due to a gradual perception that none of the changes that were ordered were changes in anything that was really fundamental. We may say, I think, that taking the history as a whole, the attitude of these men—trained, let us remember, to look always and everywhere for precedent, and to abhor discontinuity as Nature abhors a vacuum, unlikely, therefore, to have viewed with tolerance any process which could correctly be described as the foundation of a new Church—amounts to a verdict by experts and eyewitnesses that the often alleged foundation of a new Church in England in the sixteenth century did not happen; that there was not in the Reformation of our Church in that century any break in matters essential with the Church of Aidan and Chad, that there is a historical organic unity, as well as a unity of faith and practice, between the Society which expresses its spirit in the Book of Common Prayer, and the Society founded at the beginning of our era upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.









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